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'Baby Reindeer' Creator Richard Gadd Asks Fans to Stop Speculating on Show's Real-Life Characters

The Hollywood Reporter

April 23, 2024

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Length: 557 words

Byline: Chris Gardner

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Baby Reindeer opens with a disclosure typical amid today's boom in crime content: "This is a true story."

It's a fitting declaration as the new Netflix limited series, which shot to No. 1 on the streamer's TV rankings over the weekend to become the latest viral hit, is based on the life and experiences of its creator, writer, executive producer and star, Richard Gadd. The multihyphenate adapted it from his award-winning Edinburgh Festival Fringe one-man play.

Baby Reindeer casts Gadd as Donny Dunn, a struggling comedian who encounters a lonely woman one day while at his bartending gig. The chance meeting, during which he offers her a complimentary cup of tea when she turns up in tears, spirals over many months as it's revealed that Martha, who is played by Jessica Gunning, is a dangerous serial stalker.

Richard Gadd as Donny in one of his stand-up scenes.

The characters develop a warped relationship that impacts those closest to Donny, including his co-workers, a trans girlfriend named Teri (played by Nava Mau), his parents, ex-girlfriend and her mother, among others. That just scratches the surface of what's revealed over the course of seven episodes, and to reveal any more would spoil the experience for those who have yet to see it.

"It's all emotionally 100 percent true if that makes sense," [Gadd recently told Variety](#). "It's all borrowed from instances that happened to me and real people that I met. But of course, you can't do the exact truth, for both legal and artistic reasons. I mean, there's certain protections, you can't just copy somebody else's life and name and put it onto television. And obviously, we were very aware that some characters in it are vulnerable people, so you don't want to make their lives more difficult. So you have to change things to protect yourself and protect other people."

Richard Gadd as Donny and Nava Mau as Teri in a scene from Baby Reindeer.

While Gadd was clear in a mission to protect the real-life people on which he based the Baby Reindeer characters, rabid fans have had other ideas. In recent days, internet sleuths, media outlets and TikTok creators have launched investigations attempting to discover the true identity of Martha and Teri as well as a successful TV writer who becomes a mentor to Donny only to take advantage of him in dark and disturbing ways. Gadd has taken notice of the posts and the headlines.

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"People I love, have worked with, and admire (including Sean Foley) are unfairly getting caught up in speculation," Gadd posted in an Instagram Story on Monday. "Please don't speculate on who any of the real life people could be. That's not the point of our show."

The man Gadd mentioned in his post, Foley, a veteran writer, actor and director, has responded on X (formerly Twitter), by stating, "Police have been informed and are investigating all defamatory abusive and threatening posts against me."

Tom Goodman-Hill as Darrien in Baby Reindeer, a character that has sparked speculation as to who the real-life person could be.

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